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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/046,294	01/16/2002	Brian Graham Taylor	12359	2323

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DORSEY & WHITNEY LLP
Suite 400
1660 International Drive
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EXAMINER

BOCHNA, DAVID

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3679

DATE MAILED: 02/09/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s) <i>SW</i>	
	10/046,294	TAYLOR, BRIAN GRAHAM	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	David E. Bochna	3679	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 December 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 7-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 7-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claim 7 is objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 7 recites the limitation "the threaded portion" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1 and 7-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith et al.

In regard to claim 1, Smith et al. (fig. 1) discloses a riser connector for connecting first 14 and second tubulars 12 of a riser; the connector comprising a first portion 74 on the first tubular and a second portion 48 on the second tubular, wherein the first and second portions each have axially extending portions (74, 24 and 44, 66) which in the assembled connector are mutually parallel.

In regard to claim 7, the axially extending portions on each tubular are provided above and below the threaded portion.

In regard to claim 8, a spigot 32, 48 and a socket 74, 66 comprise the axially extending portions on each tubular.

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In regard to claim 9, the spigot 32, 48 is provided between the tubulars' threaded face and terminus.

In regard to claim 10, the spigot 32 on the first tubular 14 engages the socket 66 on the second tubular 12.

In regard to claim 11, the spigot 48 on the second tubular 12 engages the socket 74 on the first tubular.

In regard to claim 12, the first tubular 14 comprises a pin connector.

In regard to claim 13, the second tubular 12 comprises a box connector.

In regard to claim 14, the socket 74 of the first tubular and spigot 48 on the second tubular 12 are greater in length than the socket 66 of the second tubular and spigot 32 of the first tubular.

In regard to claim 15, the axially extending portions are parallel to the axis of the tubulars.

In regard to claim 16, the first and second tubulars have a tapered profile 22, 38.

In regard to claim 17, the tapered portions of the first and second tubulars are the threaded portions 22, 38 of the first and second tubulars and have co-operating tapers to facilitate mating of the two portions.

In regard to claim 18, Smith et al. discloses a method for connecting a first tubular 14 in a riser via a riser connector, the riser connector comprising a first portion on the first tubular and a second portion on the second tubular, wherein the first and second portions each have axially extending portions (74, 24 and 44, 66) which in the assembled connector are mutually parallel, the method comprising the steps of:

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gripping a first tubular 10 at a position spaced from its terminus;

Engaging the first and second tubulars;

Gripping the second tubular; and

applying torque between the tubulars.

In regard to claim 19, the first and second portions have mutually engaging threaded portions 22, 38.

In regard to claim 20, the axially extending portions 74, 24, 44, 66 are unthreaded.

In regard to claim 21, the axially extending portions are load-bearing and allow the transfer of loads between the tubulars.

In regard to claim 22, the axially extending portions allow the transfer of bending loads between the tubulars.

In regard to claim 23, first and second axially extending portions are provided on each tubular.

In regard to claim 24, the first axially extending portion 74, 48 on each tubular is greater in length than the second axially extending portion 24, 66 on each tubular.

4. Claims 1 and 7-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Reimert '204.

In regard to claim 1, Reimert '204 (fig. 2) discloses a riser connector for connecting first 10 and second tubulars 12 of a riser; the connector comprising a first portion on the first tubular and a second portion on the second tubular, wherein the first and second portions each have axially extending portions (36, 26 and 74, 86) which in the assembled connector are mutually parallel.

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In regard to claim 7, the axially extending portions on each tubular are provided above and below a threaded portion 30, 81.

In regard to claim 8, a spigot 36, 74 and a socket 26, 86 comprise the axially extending portions on each tubular.

In regard to claim 9, the spigot 36, 74 is provided between the tubulars' threaded face and terminus 46.

In regard to claim 10, the spigot 36 on the first tubular 10 engages the socket 74 on the second tubular 12.

In regard to claim 11, the spigot 86 on the second tubular 12 engages the socket 26 on the first tubular.

In regard to claim 12, the first tubular 10 comprises a pin connector.

In regard to claim 13, the second tubular 12 comprises a box connector.

In regard to claim 14, the socket 74 of the first tubular and spigot 36 on the second tubular are greater in length than the socket 26 of the second tubular and spigot 86 of the first tubular.

In regard to claim 15, the axially extending portions are parallel to the axis of the tubulars.

In regard to claim 16, the first and second tubulars have a tapered profile 30,81.

In regard to claim 17, the tapered portions of the first and second tubulars are the threaded portions of the first and second tubulars and have co-operating tapers to facilitate mating of the two portions.

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In regard to claim 18, Reimert '204 discloses a method for connecting a first tubular 10 in a riser via a riser connector, the riser connector comprising a first portion on the first tubular and a second portion on the second tubular, wherein the first and second portions each have axially extending portions (74, 86 and 36, 26) which in the assembled connector are mutually parallel, the method comprising the steps of:

gripping a first tubular 10 at a position spaced from its terminus;

Engaging the first and second tubulars;

Gripping the second tubular; and

applying torque between the tubulars.

In regard to claim 19, the first and second portions have mutually engaging threaded portions 30, 81.

In regard to claim 20, the axially extending portions 74, 86, 36, 26 are unthreaded.

In regard to claim 21, the axially extending portions are load-bearing and allow the transfer of loads between the tubulars.

In regard to claim 22, the axially extending portions allow the transfer of bending loads between the tubulars.

In regard to claim 23, first and second axially extending portions are provided on each tubular.

In regard to claim 24, the first axially extending portion 36, 74 on each tubular is greater in length than the second axially extending portion 86, 26 on each tubular.

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Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed on 12/22/03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Smith et al. does not disclose a "riser", but rather a downhole tool and that a riser is a pipe line that extends from a seabed to the surface. However the Applicant does not supply any support that the term "riser" only applies to pipes extending from a sea floor. The Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition defines riser as "a vertical pipe (as for water or gas)...". Because Smith et al. discloses a coupling for a downhole pipe running vertically into the ground, the Smith et al. prior art rejection has been maintained.

Applicant also argues that the coupling of Smith et al. is made to handle high torsion loads and not high bending loads, such as the present invention. However, the focus of Smith et al.'s invention is irrelevant, as Smith et al. discloses all of the structural limitations recited by the Applicant.

Conclusion

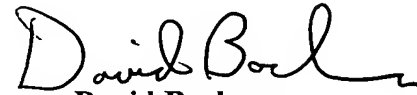
6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Calle, Sr. et al., Pallini, Jr et al., Mallis, Smith et al., Reimert, Reimert and Brunato all disclose similar couplings common in the art.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David E. Bochna whose telephone number is (703) 306-9040. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-5:30 Monday-Thursday and every other Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lynne H. Browne can be reached on (703) 308-1159. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-2168.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Bochna". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Bochna
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3679
February 5, 2004